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Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project Receives 2003 Coastal America Partnership Award from President Bush

Baltimore – The Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project Team received the 2003 Coastal America Partnership Award today during a special ceremony at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club in Stevensville, Md. This award recognizes outstanding team efforts to protect and restore coastal resources working through partnerships with federal, state and local governments, non-profit organizations and private industry. The assistant secretaries of the federal agencies in the Coastal America partnership select nominations for this award.

John Paul Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, presented the award on behalf of President Bush and the Coastal America Partnership to the Poplar Island Environmental Restoration team.

Accepting the team plaques were representative of the co-leads of the project, Col. Robert J. Davis, Jr., Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, and Trent M. Kittleman, Deputy Secretary for the Maryland Department of Transportation. Representatives from the many federal, state and local governments and private organizations that supported the Poplar Island Restoration Project received a plaque and a letter from President George W. Bush.

Some of the many other agencies represented were the Maryland Port Administration, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Environmental Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Talbot County, Maryland Watermen's Association, Maryland Ornithological Society and many others.

Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. was unable to attend the ceremony, but said of the Award, "I commend President Bush for recognizing the importance of the Poplar Island restoration project. The Ehrlich Administration is committed to meaningful environmental restoration and the Coastal America Partnership Award underscores the importance of our efforts."

Since the mid 1990s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Maryland Port Administration and other federal and state agencies, and environmental organizations have supported the Poplar Island project, a dredged material beneficial-use placement site. Using suitable dredged material from the approach channels to the Port of Baltimore, the Poplar

Poplar Island Award/2-2-2

Island team has successfully recreated more than 1,100 acres of upland, marsh and wetland habitat. Today, this island habitat serves as a natural filter to improve water quality and provides important nesting areas for a variety of native wildlife species.

“The Army Corps of Engineers is proud of the Poplar Island project because it is about finding a win-win solution to a tough problem. It’s about responsible stewardship of our environment, and most of all, it’s about teamwork,” said Davis.

President Bush’s letter of to each of the recipients read in part "Congratulations to each of the members of the Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Team on receiving the Coastal America 2003 Partnership Award. The partnership you forged...[is] creating valuable habitat for many of the Chesapeake Bay’s fish and wildlife species. I appreciate your efforts to bring together collective resources to meet common goals and better our environment. Please accept my best wishes for your continued success."

“The Poplar Island project has proven that environmental and economic goals can work hand in hand,” said U.S. Senator Paul S. Sarbanes, who spearheaded congressional approval of the project. “Poplar Island created a sea change in the traditional approaches that had been taken to disposing of dredged material. It is only fitting that this project is being recognized for these achievements.”

For more information on Coastal America, log on the Internet at **www.coastalamerica.gov**. For more information on the Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project visit the project’s web site at **www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/Maryland/PoplarIsland/index.html**.